

Linda Evans Parlette

WASHINGTON STATE SENATOR ~ 12th LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

WINTER 2002



Serving the 12th Legislative District is an honor and a privilege. To best serve you, I must hear your thoughts, so please do not hesitate to contact me.

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STANDING COMMITTEES:

Agriculture & International Trade; Health & Long-Term Care; Higher Education; Ways & Means

SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

Joint Legislative Task Force on Nursing Homes; National Council of State Legislators' Assembly on State Issues Children, Family & Health Committee; National Council of State Legislators' Assembly on Federal Issues Health Committee



Dear neighbors:

2001 was quite a year. Just when we thought we had recovered from the earthquake, the energy crisis and the drought emergency, we were hit with tragic events that considerably dwarfed those problems.

At no time in our nation's great history have we been forced to deal with such devastation. My parents' generation experienced World War II, my generation experienced the Viet Nam war, and now all of us, including my children's generation, have been touched by the tragic events of Sept. 11.

This legislative session, I have an even greater appreciation for the freedoms and liberties afforded to us under the U.S. Constitution and the process by which we govern our great nation. President Franklin Roosevelt once said, "Those who have long enjoyed such privileges that we enjoy forget in time that men have died to win them."

The Legislature faces significant challenges with the dramatic downturn in the economy, the passage of another tax-cut initiative, and resulting decline in state revenues. We must reassess the state budget, and in doing so, protect essential services including making sure we do not reduce public safety. Transportation remains a priority as we look to provide relief for our state's commuters and freight.

I am proud to represent you as your state senator, and will continue to serve the 12th Legislative District to the best of my ability.

Sincerely,

Sen. Linda Evans Parlette

Working for Washington

Debate has ranged over whether, within various state rankings, Washington is within the top ten worst or best places to do business. Look at it any way you like; these are not top ten rankings we want any part of:

Washington business rankings:

- ~ 1st highest in terms of unemployment tax liability.
- ~ 1st highest in terms of new business failures.
- ~ 2nd worst in terms of traffic congestion.
- ~ 5th highest in terms of regulatory burden.
- ~ 10th highest in terms of state and local tax burden.

During the first week of session, Boeing President and CEO, Alan Mulally, spoke before the House Commerce and Labor Committee stressing the need for Washington to become competitive again.

For years, our area has seen its share of economic ups and downs. The current statewide economic

condition only makes this situation more challenging. So what can we do to get people back to work?

Throughout the legislative interim, my fellow Senate Republican colleagues and I conducted a study called, *Working for Washington*. We met in our districts with local business leaders to listen to their concerns about how state policies impact their businesses, and to take note of suggested ways in which harmful policies could be changed to benefit business throughout the state. Among the most commonly discussed issues were regulations, business-related taxes, and health care.

Much of what our area business leaders contributed will be incorporated into a legislative package this session.

For a copy of the *Working for Washington* report and recommendations, please contact my office.

Budget

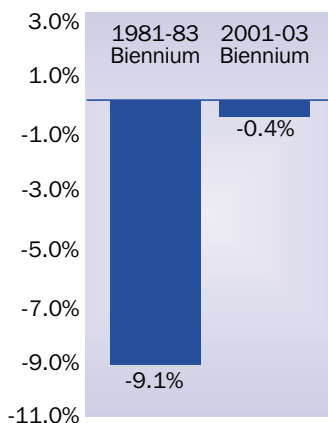
During the 2001 session, the Legislature approved a \$22.8 billion state operating budget. At the time, I expressed grave concerns that the budget was not sustainable, believing that deep cuts in state services, spending down all of our reserves, and increasing taxes would be our only options. I voted against the budget last session for this very reason.

Since then, our state's revenues have dropped dramatically and the budget shortfall has grown to \$1.2 billion.

While the current budget situation presents a considerable challenge, it's not one without solutions.

Over the past twenty years, Washington has been in two recessions—1981-83 and the current downturn. As the chart below shows, the current predicament is not nearly as significant as the early '80s crunch. Current revenues are only 0.4 percent less than last biennium's revenues.

**The Last Two Washington Recessions:
Comparing State Revenue Downturns**



**Change in State Tax Revenue From
Prior Biennium**

Source: Washington State Office of Forecast Council,
November 2001 Report

There is no need to raise taxes or cut essential services. Prudent changes can bring the state's fiscal house in order. The real concern is if this problem is not addressed now, we will create more headaches in future budget cycles.

Bill Sponsorships

The following is a partial list of bills I have sponsored with a brief description of each.

SB 5960—addresses liability issues associated with marketing prescription drugs directly to consumers.

SB 6328—lengthens the time Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA) approved tents can be used in the cherry harvest.

SB 6405—allows counties to review their comprehensive plans every 6 months, instead of 12 months, under the Growth Management Act.

SB 5034—changes the way in which presidential electors are apportioned in Washington state.

For more information on these bills, please contact my office. I would be happy to provide you that information and would appreciate any feedback you may have.

Transportation

Transportation is largely what kept the Legislature in Olympia for several additional months last year. Clearly, the main goal to a healthy roads package is to get people to work and back home safely and on time. At the same time, well maintained roads would work to transport freight to and from the ports with little to no delays due to traffic congestion.

Legislators could agree in the 1980s because it wasn't a high profile issue, the cultural divide between rural and urban areas wasn't as pronounced, and the anti-tax movement had not yet taken off.

Voters want to believe we can be accountable with their tax dollars. If we pass a gas tax, they want to know the projects will be built efficiently.

We must first build the public's trust. In doing so, I believe we can come to agreement on an efficient, cost effective transportation package. If we can act accountably and send a package to the voters that they can support, it will be much easier to promote such transportation improvements.

We need a modest statewide package that equally addresses the rural and urban needs of the state. Additionally,



a "regional package" must accompany the statewide package for the freedom of the Puget Sound area to address its own transportation needs. This regional package would allow Puget Sound area residents to tax themselves for regional transportation needs.

Below is a chart which shows for every dollar of gas tax revenues collected by the state in our area over the past ten years, we get back more in return for transportation projects. Conversely, the Puget Sound area counties get less than their dollar back.

We have made bipartisan headway in the Senate by coming to agreement on a regional transportation plan for Puget Sound, and a package of 9 efficiency measures.

Transportation is a work in progress and changes weekly, and sometimes even daily. For a list and brief description of the transportation efficiency measures passed by the Senate, please contact me.

Health Care

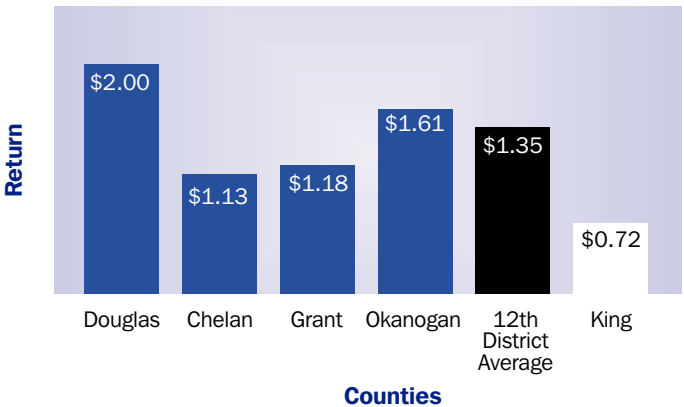
Revitalization of the health insurance market continues to be a top priority of mine. This should not be a partisan issue, as it would simply allow for more choices in the marketplace. Unfortunately, it has become a partisan issue in Olympia over the last ten years, making it difficult to get a true overview of how the state programs interact and affect the private marketplace. I continue to be persistent in pushing for choices for those of us in rural areas.

As the only registered pharmacist in the Washington State Legislature and one of ten pharmacist state senators in the nation (the only Republican woman), I continue to keep up-to-date on all the prescription drug issues and keep in touch with legislators from throughout the country with a similar interest of solving this problem experienced by so many states in our nation.

As always, your input is appreciated.



Return on the \$1.00



Source: Washington State Department of Transportation 2000.

Weekly E-Mail Updates

Would you like to receive weekly e-mail updates throughout the 2002 Legislative Session?

If so, please send me an e-mail with
"Weekly E-mail Update"
in the subject field and your name and home
address in the text of your e-mail.
My e-mail address is: parlette_li@leg.wa.gov

If you do not have e-mail, you can also
receive these weekly updates via the U.S. mail.
Just contact my office and provide
your name and mailing address.

Capitol Tours

Interested in traveling to
Olympia to visit your state capitol?
Don't miss the opportunity to take a tour.

Tours are not limited to the Capitol
building itself, but can also include the
Temple of Justice, and other buildings
on the capitol campus.

*Scheduling a tour is easy—just call
or e-mail my office and let us know
when you will be in town.*

Did You Know?

In 1997, Washington had 15,088 pages of rules for people to try to digest. Now, five years after Gov. Gary Locke issued an executive order directing state agencies to "eliminate unnecessary state regulations and cut red tape," we have 15,126 pages of rules—roughly 40 more pages than when we started. (Source: Washington State Register)

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